



STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on G.M. No. 752
Committee: EDU
Date/Time: Friday, April 17, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of the nomination of Ms. Cheryl Cudiamat to the Early Learning Board.

The Early Learning Board is responsible for formulating statewide policy related to early learning and serves as the governing board for EOEL.

Ms. Cudiamat was first appointed to the Early Learning Board in 2024 and has since demonstrated a consistent commitment to the Board's work. She attends meetings regularly, actively participates in discussions, and offers thoughtful and candid perspectives that strengthen Board deliberations.

As the CEO and Director of Keiki Care Center of Hawaii, Inc., Ms. Cudiamat brings valuable, first-hand experience as both a business owner and a local provider of early childhood education. In this role, she oversees all aspects of preschool operations, including licensing, enrollment, and fiscal management. Her experience helps ensure that the Board's decisions take into account the practical realities faced by community based providers across the State.

Ms. Cudiamat's service on the Board also fulfills the statutory requirement pursuant to section 302L-1.6, HRS, that the Early Learning Board include a member with experience as a local provider of early childhood education and development services.

Ms. Cudiamat's combination of leadership experience, operational knowledge, and commitment to children and families makes her a valuable member of the Early Learning Board. EOEL respectfully urges the Committee to support her nomination.

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April 10, 2026

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Elaine Yamashita

Re: GM 752, reappointing Cheryl Cudiamat to the state Early Learning Board
April 17, 2026, 1 p.m.

Aloha Honorable Chair Mercado Kim, Vice-Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

While I currently serve as chair of the Early Learning Board, this is my personal testimony.

I strongly support the reappointment of **Cheryl Cudiamat** to the Early Learning Board. She started serving in 2024, and has served as a voice for the early learning professionals as the board discusses our state mixed delivery system for keiki birth to kindergarten entry.

Cheryl's experience as Director and founder of Keiki Care Center, a community based provider of early learning, brings insight to issues that relate to that sector of the mixed delivery system. Her business background is also a quality that provides a valuable perspective.

Last year, the Legislature amended our board composition to include at least one voting member who is from the local child care community. Cheryl fulfills that [position on our board.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Elaine Yamashita
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